EQUAL PAY FOR WOMEN!

A Nation-Wide Fight is Begun to Eslablish the Equalily of the Sexes, and GRACE STRACHAN Who Won for New York Teachers Will Lead It

Equal Pay Isn't Going to Stop With the Teachers of the United States. It is Going to Extend to the Stenographers, the Artists, to *All* Working Women, and Its Extension Is in No Way Dependent Upon the Growth of Woman's Suffrage---So Says Grace Strachan.

By MARY KATHERINE WOODS.

"THE women school teachers of New York have sounded the rallying call of the women's revolution.

"This entire country must, and will, recognize the industrial equality of women."

To Grace C. Strachan, district superintendent in the public schools of Brooklyn, and leader in the victorious fight for "equal pay for equal work" throughout the school system of New York City, the battle that she and her fellow teachers have just won is not concerned with but one city or but one profession.

It touches all women who work.

It reaches every city, every industrial town, every village in America.

It is the national women's revolution.

The battle, Miss Strachan and her fellow teachers are quick to explain, has no necessary connection with the cause of women's suffrage. Whether or not the laws of the country are to be in the near future so amended as to give women the right to vote, the customs of the country will be so changed as to grant women the right to be paid—paid for their work in exactly the same ratio as men are paid.

The women's battle is simply for the recognition of their industrial equality.

Miss Strachan herself, and the women who worked with her in New York and are ready to work with her all over America, aren't wasting time in criticisms and whinings. Their appeal is altogether constructive. Their argument is one of common sense.

And so, having won a big fight in New York, they are ready to join the women of other cities and of other professions in winning a big fight everywhere.

"Mayor Gaynor signed the bill providing for equal pay for women teachers on Thursday, the nineteenth of October," said Miss Strachan.

"I told him then, and I want to tell every one all over this country, that that was just as big a thing as the signing of Magna Charta or the Declaration of Independence. That's a date to remember!

"It was epoch-making. It was, like Magna Charta and our Declaration of Independence, the breaking down of old worn-out tyrannies, the casting off of the shackles of useless tradition.

"For the first time in human history the law expressly provides that no discrimination in pay be made against women because of their sex.

"It isn't going to stop with New York, you may be very sure.

"It isn't going to stop with teachers."

While Miss Strachan is eager in her determination to bring about women's industrial equality, while she recognizes the fact that old prejudices must be beaten down and old laws set at naught, neither she nor her fellow soldiers are making complaint their ammunition.

"Things aren't right about women's work and women's wages," they say.

"But we are not going to waste our time and yours fussing about that.

"What we are going to do is make them better.

"We are building things up, not whining about 'oppression' and unfairness."

As a matter of fact, Miss Strachan explains, she understands perfectly the way the payment "by sex" instead of "by work" came to be, grew into a custom. It is quite natural. Possibly at one time it was quite right.

"But it isn't right now," she added, emphatically. "It isn't natural.

"It is going the way of all worn-out, outgrown, useless, encumbering things.

"The day of discrimination against women because of their sex is very nearly over.

"And when it is quite gone from us a day will dawn of greater efficiency.

"It is for that that we are all of us working."

BACK in the old days when the industries of life were concentrated in the home, Miss Strachan continued, women neither received nor expected pay for their work. They spun and wove and made clothing for the family. They cooked and washed and scrubbed. They taught the children. They did all the work of the home, and they were not paid for it. It was a part of the making of the family life. It was "keeping house."

When women began to go into the factories to follow their industries, they were content, having received nothing at all heretofore, to work for little money. Especially during the years of the Civil War, when it was impossible to find men to do the work of the nation, and women had to be called in in their stead, did women begin to take hold of industrial work, of institutional work, of professional work. And they did it for a low wage.

But now conditions have changed. Women must earn their living as must men. Industry has gone out of the home and women have followed it. Education has gone out of the home and women have followed it. Women have become, in industry and in professional activities, master craftsmen. They compete with men now on their own ground. They must be judged, the teacher explained, by their efficiency. And so it is by their efficiency that they must be paid.

That the new era of industrial equality will bring with it a broader life for women everywhere and a wider capacity for usefulness, Miss Strachan has no doubt.

"To me, the victory of the New York teachers is epoch-making not only as beginning the general fight for women's higher wages," she said, "but as opening the door toward women's broader life and higher capability.

"Whatever assures the woman worker of more money makes it possible for her to live a wider life.

"It makes it possible for her to develop her mind and her character in a way that is forbidden so long as she lives upon little more than a 'starvation wage.' The woman teacher, for instance, has been practically prohibited in the past from the full development of her mentality, her powers. She has been too grievously underpaid. Now that she is sure of being paid the salary that she is worth, paid every cent that she earns, it will be possible for her to broaden out.

"Her work will be enlarged and made better in consequence.

"And what is true of the teacher is true of the factory girl, the stenographer, the artist.

"What is true of New York is true of any other city in America.

"A lawyer told me a few days ago that the passage of the equal pay law here will do more for women throughout America than would the passage of an equal suffrage bill.

"Personally, I do not wish to discuss that, partly because I feel that the suffrage question is not necessarily connected with the question of industrial recognition, and partly because I am perfectly sure of the concrete workings out of the equal pay bill and not perfectly sure of the concrete workings out of suffrage. Suffrage is too general a thing to dismiss with a sentence.

"But I am absolutely convinced—and I know that fifteen thousand other women are convinced with me—that the passage of this equal pay bill does establish women's industrial equality. I am absolutely convinced that the teachers' action will be the signal for action by women in other professions.

"I am absolutely convinced that the general status of women in labor and in life is going to be better now than it has ever been before. It is going to be better because working women are to be paid for the work they do and not because they are women instead of men.

"I don't think that the public realizes how far-reaching a thing the passage of this teachers' salary bill is, how revolutionary is its influence, how deep it goes into the industrial life of the nation.

"The teachers' salary bill has been a sort of a test case. Its passage means the women's victory."

The signing by Mayor Gaynor of the bill providing that "no discrimination in teachers' salaries be made on account of sex" is the last triumph in a campaign which Miss Strachan has been carrying on for more than five years.

EARLY in the year 1906 she began to organize the teachers, to agitate the question of "equal pay for equal work." In April, 1906, an association of public school women, pledged to work for the passage of an equal pay bill, was formed. Since then the war has been waged unceasingly. The teachers' bill has been presented and defeated and presented again. Men have voted against it, repeated their opposition at its next presentation, and then been convinced of its justice and helped to urge its final victory. Miss Strachan has been untiring, has refused to accept defeat or discouragement, has gathered her forces together again and again, has done battle valiantly, and at last has won.

Now she has received telegrams and congratulatory messages, running into the thousands, from every State in the Union. She has received invitations to address meetings of women workers in practically all our big cities. In many places she has already spoken. She is accepting the invitations.

"I believe the school teachers to be the lowest paid set of workers, proportionately, in America," she said. "They are badly paid in New York, and they are worse paid everywhere else.

"But I realize that they are not the only women who need a wage revision. I believe that the brain-workers are, in proportion, the lowest paid. But I understand that the professions, the trades, the manufactories, are conducted alike on scales of sex discrimination.

"Well, all that, as I've said, is going to stop."

So Miss Strachan has addressed the women of Buffalo—where the maximum woman teacher's salary for the year has recently been raised from $720 to $900. She has spoken in Philadelphia; and not only women teachers, but women mill workers and women artists have come to hear her. She will speak, on December 8, in Boston, where the intellectual women of the community—the women who work with their brains—have asked her to put the women's case before them. She has gone into the towns of North and South Carolina, and the women of the factories have come with the women of the schools to hear her talk of the wage scale and the work of women. She has lectured in Baltimore to teachers and stenographers and librarians and nurses and all types of women who work.

She is about to make a tour through New England, speaking in Providence, in New Haven, in Bridgeport, in Springfield, in the big towns where thousands of women work.

She will lecture in Cleveland, in the cities of the West. She will travel, speaking in the great new centers of commerce and industry where women fill such important positions as school superintendents, as curators of museums, as government employees in places of grave responsibility.

"But the West is more advanced than the East," she declared, with a smile. "There is less discrimination against women on account of sex.

"Western cities are more ready to judge simply by efficiency, by competence. In St. Louis, among the teachers, for instance, there is no sex discrimination in the pay list at all.

"Women have wider scope, encounter fewer prejudices, in the cities of the West.

"I've noticed, oddly enough, that these things become better as one travels westward. Think of the terrible condition in Japan, China, India! Then in eastern Europe it is a little better, getting gradually better still as one approaches England. The condition of women in England is fairly enlightened.

"Yet English acquaintances have told me that it is by no means an uncommon thing for a middle-class Englishwoman to black her husband's boots!

"Well, here in Eastern America, in these coast cities of the United States, we have gone farther than that. But even so there is much to be done. And the Western cities are more advanced than we. The farther you get from the East the more prejudices you drop by the way!"

Grace C. Strachan.

MISS STRACHAN is far from agreeing with the theory that women's right to "equal pay" is lessened by the possibility of marriage and retirement.

"It may be that a great deal of the inequality of teachers' salaries in the past has sprung from such a theory," she said. "But the theory is not fair.

"What my services are worth to the Board of Education and the city of New York to-day depend simply upon the efficiency of my work to-day.

"My income ought not to be regulated on the supposition that some time—ten years hence, perhaps—I might possibly get married and give up my work.

"Ten years hence I might be dead. Ten years hence a man might be dead. I can't see the justice of that point of view, in teaching, or in anything else."

Speaking of sex discrimination in the payment of men and women in other professions than that of teaching, Miss Strachan cited the case of a woman artist she knows.

"She is a girl of marked talent and ability," she said. "And she has had the finest education. Yet her work does not bring anything like the price paid to one of the boy graduates of the same school.

"And she told me that she had been advised not to sign her work with her entire name, but to use only her last name and her first initial. It was explained that her feminine name, proving that the artist was a woman, might influence buyers against her, so that she would not be paid so much for her work!

"I have heard that there are employers who pay as much to their women workers as to the men. But I have never met any of them. A department store man once told me that he was willing to pay a woman buyer the same salary as a man buyer; but he was very vague about it.

"As to medicine and the law, I realize that women are mere babies in these two professions. Women lawyers and doctors do not command anywhere near the fees that eminent men lawyers and doctors do. But I am ready to blame that on the fact that there are, after all, no exceedingly eminent—no pre-eminent—women lawyers and doctors. These professions are in their infancy among the women of America."

Miss Strachan is careful to keep clear of hysterical statements, of emotional arguments. Talking with her, it is easy to understand how she became the leader of the teachers' battle, how she won the victory, how she has come to be recognized all over America as the woman to whom other women rally in their fight for an equal wage.

There is absolutely nothing hysterical about her, nothing excitable. Obviously, she has no nerves. Obviously, she argues things out reasonably and without personal prejudice. She is the sort of woman who would work for months almost in silence—but who would never stop.

She speaks in a low voice, slowly, with a quiet force. She is the sort of woman who would never "make a fuss" about what she was doing, but who would just irresistibly, in the face of all opposition, go on doing it. A large, athletic, dark-eyed woman, she looks the hard worker she is. In discussions, she has a knack of listening without a word until her opponent finishes speaking and then tearing his argument to pieces with a sentence or two. It is plain to be seen that the great weapon in all her conflict has been common sense.

TALKING with Miss Strachan, one recognizes how characteristic was the fact that she led the women teachers to triumph after a five-year fight, when all the time she herself had been receiving the same pay as a man. It was their battle she was fighting; it was no personal quarrel.

"My own part of the teachers' salary fight was fought out eleven years ago," she said. "In 1900, when the Davis law was being drawn up, I had just been made a district superintendent. I was in Buffalo at the time, visiting my family, when I heard that it was proposed to insert a provision that men district superintendents were to be paid $5,000 a year, and women in the same position, doing exactly the same work, $2,500. I took the first train back to the city, and I made a great uproar over it all, and of course the sentence was changed; it read, in the law, $5,000 a year for the district superintendent!

"Then, as I took up the district superintendent's work," Miss Strachan went on, "I noticed more and more the discrepancy between the wages of men and the wages of women. They were doing exactly the same work. Yet a young man began his teaching with a yearly wage of $900, and a woman had to teach eight years and be examined three times before she could get that much. By the time she was receiving $880, the man was getting $1,625! Before she could get $900, even after teaching eight years, she had to get a special certificate of fitness and ability; the man was required to furnish no such guarantee!

"That, and other instances like it, seemed to me most unjust. I talked to other women about it, and found that they though so, too. So we used to hold little meetings to discuss it, and more and more teachers got interested.

"I told the teachers, and I have always been sure myself, that we would get what we wanted if we all wanted it, and if we just stuck it out. So we did!

"The old way of paying, the discrimination against women because of their sex, was so unjust as to be immoral. That has been put a stop to in New York. It must be everywhere.

"In our battle, most of the hardest opposition has come from men teachers and superintendents. It may be now that the appointing power, the Board of Education and the Board of Superintendents, who were against us, may seek to put more men in positions as teachers—for a little while at least.

"But we do not fear that, really. Capability is the real test. The new salary schedule will mean a higher standard of efficiency. The women's work stands acknowledged good.

"A man principal told me the other day," added Miss Strachan, smiling, "that a good mother was worth her weight in gold; and that a good woman teacher was worth much more than that, for she was forty or fifty mothers all in one!

"And a man who has worked against us until just recently informed me last week that he would vote for anything we suggested, no matter what it was, just because we were so constant and persevering!

"Constant and persevering—that's the women's spirit," declared Miss Strachan, emphatically. "That is the spirit everywhere, in all professions. That is our slogan in the campaign for equal pay.

"The day that the Mayor signed the bill was the anniversary of the surrender of Cornwallis," she remarked. "That is most symbolic to me.

"This, too, is a victory of independence, the beginning of a new era."

WHY NOT CATALOGUE HER CHARMS LIKE THIS?

CONGRESSMAN FOWLER of Illinois, at a dinner in Washington, elaborated some of the points that he had made in the House in his eloquent diatribe against the idle rich.

"The idle rich woman," he said, "will not consent to grow old. Hence, as her natural charms disappear, artificial charms replace them.

"We read in the papers of this or that function, that Mrs. Van Guelder's dress was by Paquin and Mrs. Cash's cloak was by Callot Soeurs, but why shouldn't every old lady's catalogue of charms be complete—like this:

And Representative Fowler laughed and quoted from an imaginary society column.

"Mrs. A. B. Gold-Bonds looked lovely in a cloth-of-gold dinner gown by Worth. Her hair was a triumph by Willie Clarkson, the famous Wardour-street wigmaker. Her singularly pure and brilliant complexion was by the Oriental Beauty Company. Her teeth were by Dr. Pull."

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A Topeka Diplomat.

"DIPLOMACY is hard to define," said Senator Curtis at a luncheon in Topeka. "It is, however, easy to illustrate. Here is an illustration of diplomacy.

"A Topeka girl, one brisk Autumn evening, sat beside the warm and clanking radiator with a young man. This young man was a good catch. But, though he called often, and though he showed many evidences of affection for the girl, he had not yet mentioned marriage. He seemed uncertain. He seemed to be still on the fence.

"Well, the brisk evening I'm speaking of, at about 9 o'clock, the cook knocked at the parlor door, entered, and said respectfully:

"'What shall I give your father for his breakfast in the morning, Miss?'

"'Deviled kidney, I think, Hannah,' said the Topeka girl. 'Father, these cold mornings, is so fond of deviled kidney.'

"'Yes, Miss; and would you mind telling me how to prepare it, Miss?'

"'Soak the kidney,' was the reply, 'for three hours in cold water, changing the water twice. Then cut into slices, season highly with salt and pepper, and fry a bright brown. Now add a little warm water and stew very gently. Meanwhile prepare the sauce—four tablespoonfuls of cold gravy, one of Chutney paste, one of catsup, one of vinegar, two teaspoonfuls of made mustard, two of salt and four of butter. Mix well, pour on to the kidney, and stew gently again till done.'

"'Oh, thank you, Miss,' said the cook gratefully.

"The cook had hardly gone when the young man, a new and tender light shining from his eyes, flopped down on one knee.

"'Miss Cosgrove—Mildred—dear one,' he began."

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The Human Hill.

CHARLES FISHER, the Chicago skating champion, said on a frosty morning:

"It seems almost clear enough for ice. The ice made by such weather as this, however, would hardly do to skate on. Never go skating too early in the season. If you do you'll have trouble."

Mr. Fisher laughed gaily.

"There was once a chap," he said, "who went skating too early, and all of a sudden that afternoon loud cries for help began to echo among the bleak hills that surrounded the skating pond.

"A farmer cobbling his boots before his kitchen fire heard the shouts and yells, and ran to the pond at break-neck speed. He saw a large black hole in the ice, and a pale young fellow stood with chattering teeth shoulder-deep in the cold water.

"The farmer laid a board on the thin ice and crawled out on it to the edge of the hole. Then, extending his hand, he said:

"'Here, come over this way, and I'll lift you out.'

"'No, I can't swim,' was the impatient reply. 'Throw a rope to me. Hurry up. It's cold in here.'

"'I ain't got no rope,' said the farmer; and he added angrily: 'What if you can't swim—you can wade, I guess! The water's only up to your shoulders.'

"'Up to my shoulders?' said the young fellow. 'It's eight feet deep if it's an inch. I'm standing on the blasted fat man who broke the ice.'"